



Health & Wellbeing

July / 2021



Dealing with Loss

The last year and a half or so has been a challenge in so many ways and all of us have experienced some sense of loss. We may have lost a love one, lost a friend, lost a job, lost our freedom, lost the ability to connect with friends and family, lost education. So much loss and it has been hard. Whether we have personally had someone close to us die over this period (whether it be from Covid-19 or another illness) or whether we know people who are going through this experience - it is important that we remember that grief and bereavement is traumatic in the most normal of 'worlds' but at this time when we have not been able to say goodbye in the same ways, spend those last moments with our loved ones or do things that help with our grief (of any kind) it has made it so much more painful.



Bereavement

Being bereaved can be one of the most lonely experiences you or someone you love may go through. During the coronavirus pandemic many of us have had to spend time apart from friends and family and this can make grieving more difficult.



Feelings of isolation

Isolation can make feelings of loneliness and grief much more intense. It might have meant having to stay by yourself in the same house you shared with the person who has died, causing painful reminders at every turn. Being isolated with your family

may be a support, it might have also caused tensions. Having had children and teenagers off school in lock downs has made it difficult to deal with our own emotions and fears at the same time and dealing with them. You may have been left without practical or emotional support at a time when you need it most. Friends and relatives who might otherwise have been able to provide practical support, eg help with meals and shopping may also be isolating or preoccupied with their own family's situation.



How to help yourself

Reach out. While you may feel alone (and in some cases are, physically) know that you don't have to be alone with your grief. You can call or text your friends and family.

Look after yourself and get rest. This can sound obvious but at these times it is so easy to want to hide away. We are being encouraged to! But do try and get some fresh air or sunlight each day - even opening a window can help. Go for a walk or run, or do some exercise in your home - exercise can be really helpful. Try to keep to a regular routine of getting up and dressed and eating meals at the usual time. The structure will help, even if only a little.

Expect bad days and better days. You may find you have days when you have more energy and the grief isn't as consuming - this is normal. Some people can feel guilty when this happens, but there is no need. It is all a normal part of grieving. Seek practical help from friends, family or neighbours.

Know that what you are feeling is normal. Bereavement can have some unexpected emotional and physical effects. Knowing that others are going through the same things may help, but if you are finding it impossible to cope, do reach out for help.



How to help others

At this time of uncertainty and fear many people may struggle more than usual, but you can help them just by being you. Being the friend, partner, colleague, son they love is all you need to be. Being present with someone in their grief is not easy, but is one of the best gifts you can give to someone you care about.

Stay in contact more - ask whether they prefer phone, text or video call (if they have it). Let them talk about how they are feeling and about the person who has died - talking can be one of the most helpful things after someone dies. You may find this difficult but we are here to help you too. We have some advice on what to say and do. And remember that while you can't take someone's grief away, you can make them feel less alone.

"Some things cannot be fixed, they can only be carried."

Author unknown

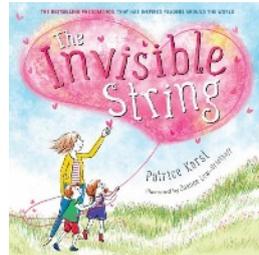
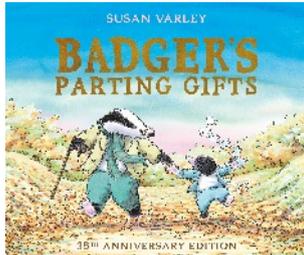
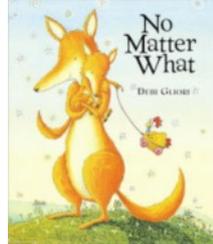
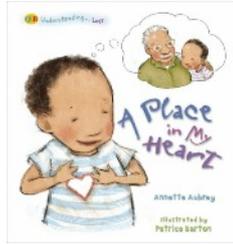
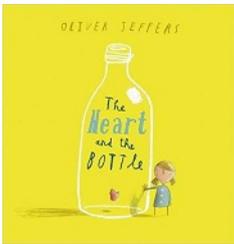
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01522 555795

Helping our children with their **loss** and finding ways to remember the **gains**.



Loss is hard for everyone including those who are young



Over the past year, we have lost loved ones and, in experiencing a disruption in most of our “normal” parts of our lives, we have also lost parts of our identity. For some, it has been a year of reflection, growth and introspection. For others, opportunities came up for new habits, innovation, volunteering and kindness. Throughout our loss, try to take some time as a family to reflect on your gains.



Loss

We may have lost jobs that we had or lost the opportunity to do what we have always done.

Gained

This may have provided new opportunities that we would have never explored or experienced.



Loss

It's been a year of things missed, postponed and cancelled - birthdays, weddings, birth, holidays and festivals

Gained

You may have gained time to yourself. In a society that glorifies busyness You may have had a year of stillness.

There are many stories out there that reveal how people have experienced loss, bereavement, change, growth, desperation, hope, in the course of 18 months. Out of loss, came hope. Out of isolation, came connection. Out of change, came innovation. Out of trauma, came growth.



FAMILY CHALLENGE - take the time to sit together and think of all the things that you may have gained of the last year or so. There have been many losses but let's spend time searching out for the gains - you will find some I promise!

What is absolutely important to remember is that the experience of the past year and a half has not been shared by everyone. We have all been in the same storm, but we

have not all been in the same boat. **The Coronavirus vaccine brings hope. The warmer weather brings smiles. However, for many of us, the next few months – and even years – will remain tough, vulnerable and uncertain.**

There are many resources out there to help children who are dealing with loss of all types. There have been some books and websites that have been included here. Remember - do not be afraid to seek professional help and advice, especially if you are dealing with your own loss too. There are people whose job it is to support people at these difficult times.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/supporting-bereaved-children-and-young-people>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-grief-and-loss>

<https://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk/latest-news/how-do-we-help-children-open-up-to-grief?>

<https://happiful.com/activities-to-help-grieving-children/>

'TIS BETTER TO HAVE LOVED AND LOST THAN NEVER TO HAVE LOVED AT ALL.
LORD TENNYSON

How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard
Winnie the Pooh

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.
DESMOND TUTU